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# Welcome to the IU School of Law

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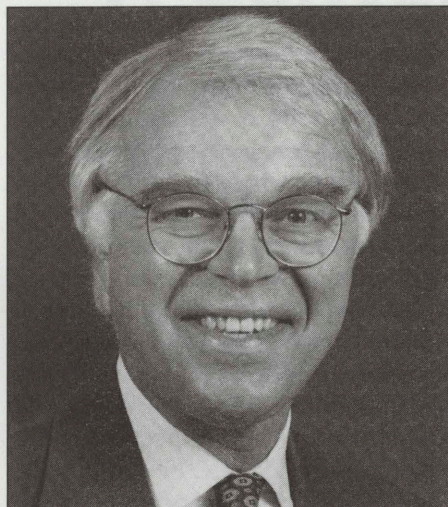
## Welcome to the IU School of Law

*On Monday, Aug. 23, 1993, the dean addressed the entering class. We share that message here with all of our alumni.*

**M**y only purpose this morning is a very happy one—and that is to welcome you all to the Law School. We are proud to have you with us, and we wish you every happiness and success.

As the Class of 1996, you join a law school community that is 151 years old—one of the oldest and finest law schools in the United States. By way of welcome, I want to tell you something about this community, why we chose you for it, and why we hope you chose us for yourself.

First of all, this is a great law school with a proud tradition in both the legal profession and the university. From its beginnings in the middle of the last century, this law school's record of achievement has been the record of its students and graduates. Your own high academic caliber and commitment to law have brought you into the same academic family as those of our graduates who are known the world over as creative lawyers and civic leaders: Supreme Court Justice Sherman Minton (Class of 1915), presidential candidate Wendell Willkie (Class of 1916), Congressman Lee Hamilton (Class of 1956), Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson (Class of 1956). We are equally proud of the hundreds of our graduates who serve society and their profession with quieter distinction, bringing judgment and justice to their communities, and who are attentive to the needs of others. You have now joined a very distinguished and accom-



Dean Alfred Aman

plished family. All of these women and men are now your sisters and brothers.

The dedication, creativity, and productivity of the law school faculty and staff make this an exciting place that works—in the classrooms, the library, the offices, the hallways. Here, we all learn from each other, all of the time. Dialogue both in class and out of class, between professors and students and among students themselves is one of the primary learning tools of this environment. Do not hold back. Ask your questions, try out your answers and formulate your own theories. The world of law is a world of words. Words, language, and the connection between language and human affairs is the stuff of law. You will learn by reading, writing, and speaking. Do *not* hold back.

The faculty are dedicated to teaching and research, reinforcing the one with the other. Your teachers will provide you with much more than

information—they will provide you with questions, cutting-edge analyses, intellectual and ethical connections that are the fruits of their own ongoing study of the law. They will not only train you—say, for the bar—they will also *educate* you by helping you formulate the questions and develop the intellectual processes that will sustain you in your professional life not only as beginners, but as seasoned advocates 20, 30, and 40, years from now. Your careers will span well into the 21st century—all of you, we hope, will attend the law school's 200th anniversary in 2042; at this law school, we have our eye on the future, for your sake.

The people and spaces within the Law School connect you both to the law school community and to the great university around us. Indeed, this law school community is an integral part of a world-renowned university. I hope you will make use of the university, not only in the joint degree programs, or for elective courses, but also to enrich your own creative imaginations, to nourish them. Come to the extracurricular lectures and seminars at the Law School, but don't ignore the academic calendar outside our walls. You will study hard, but you will have missed something essential about Indiana University if you let the concerts, theater, the art museum, and (yes) sporting events go on without you. Lose yourself in our beautiful library overlooking Dunn Woods, but don't forget to walk in Dunn Woods, whose landmarks are sculpture, the Well House, the observatory, and the changing face of the seasons.

Perhaps I can tell you something



about why we chose you for the Class of '96. We chose you as individuals.

Your individuality—your goals, achievements, abilities, and whatever is uniquely yours—is going to be the foundation of whatever you do with your legal education. Your individuality is the seat of your creative imagination and your intellectuality; it is also the heart of your integrity, your virtue, and your sense of justice.

Your individuality is going to be tested thousands of times in your daily practice of law—both by the legal problems your practice provides you, and by what it means to be a lawyer in today's world. Being a lawyer takes courage: the courage to stand up for someone else, to do for her or him what needed doing and could not be done by other means. And, although it might seem an odd thing to say, it also takes courage to stand up for the legal profession in these days. I'll explain what I mean.

The stock antipathy to lawyers we hear so much about these days is not new, except in its virulence. We hear a lot about lawyers' greed and incompetence, but surely, avarice and incompetence are randomly distributed across the population, and our profession has no more than its share. Of course, we should worry about those among our numbers who discredit their profession by mis-serving their clients and their society, but these numbers are, thankfully, small.

We hear a lot about the overuse of courts in this country, but, contrary to the common stereotype, the United States is not a society where the courts are overused. The latest figures show that some 70 percent of

Americans have consulted a lawyer for one or more matters, but, contrary to popular opinion, these matters are not all lawsuits, or even disputes. This is a society in which lawyers are intimately involved in the everyday business of life; part of the fabric of a society that lives by the rule of law. And so far as litigation goes, once U.S. litigation rates are compared to those of other industrial nations, we are not at the top of the list, but only near the top of the middle third.

These myths are propagated by well-meaning people, I'm sure, but their effect is deeply undermining. While I recognize the importance of being able to laugh at ourselves from time to time, I'm getting tired of lawyer jokes and especially the lawyer-bashing that is in such vogue these days. When people laugh at lawyers, I worry that they might be laughing at the causes lawyers serve. I worry that when they call lawyers ambulance-chasers or compare them unfavorably to snakes, that they are really laughing at the ordinary people who want and deserve redress for their injuries. I worry, too, that when they say lawyers are responsible for weakening the social fabric, they are decrying the importance of rights as a basis for a civil society, indeed, even constitutional rights. Or when they lament what they erroneously believe to be this country's high rates of litigation, they are dismissing the reality of people's grievances and the legitimacy of their disputes.

The fact is that we live in a complicated world, in which people's need for law exceeds their own abilities to negotiate relationships on their own. My own prediction is that more and

more of lawyers' work will take place at negotiating tables, rather than in courtrooms, and that future lawyers will be increasingly involved in the affirmative task of building the global relationships that will be the shape of the future. Lawyers are already involved in deeply constructive ways, not only protecting individual Americans against the unruly demands of a mass society, but also in helping other nations build their own democracies from the ground up. American lawyers are also helping nations work together to protect the global environment and other world resources, human and otherwise. People who attack the legal profession would perhaps wish they could role back the clock to the days when lawyers were local professionals, but today, they are global professionals serving entirely new purposes along with the ones that your older sisters and brothers in the law know and knew.

I firmly believe that this new world needs every one of you. Hold your head high when you say you are preparing for a career in the law. It is an honorable profession, at the very core of our democracy and the rule of law, here and around the world.

So, a warm welcome to you all. Welcome to the Law School and to the threshold of the legal profession. We hope you will be proud to have chosen both, as you face personal futures that will give you many chances to discover your own capacity for courage, creativity, and service. We believe in you, we are happy you are here, and all of us in the Law School community look forward to knowing you.